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衛生署  
Department of Health

## Blueberry and Hepatitis A

Blueberry is a popular fruit, which is low in energy and high in fibre. Moreover, it contains an antioxidant anthocyanin that helps to reduce the harm caused by free radicals and thus prevents diseases.



Blueberries

Nevertheless, blueberry became a fruit of concern since rumors about its consumption safety spread through the internet and phone messages. The messages claimed that some individuals bought blueberries from supermarkets and got infected with Hepatitis A after consuming it. This has caused fear among the public and held many of us back from consuming blueberries.

According to the Centre for Health Protection, so far no epidemiological evidence can be found to prove the connection between the recent spike of Hepatitis A cases and blueberries.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the rumors, it is important for us to pay attention to personal, food, and environmental hygiene in order to prevent hepatitis A. Hepatitis A virus is usually transmitted by a faecal-oral route either through contaminated drinks or food such as shellfish, or directly from person to person. The members of public should take heed of the preventive measures below against hepatitis A:

- Wash hands properly with liquid soap and water before eating or handling food, and after going to the toilet or changing diapers;
- Purchase fresh food from reliable sources and do not patronise illegal hawkers;
- Drinking water should be from the mains and preferably boiled;
- Avoid high-risk food like shellfish, raw food or semi-cooked food;
- Clean and wash food thoroughly. Scrub and rinse shellfish in clean water. Remove the viscera if appropriate; for food to be consumed without cooking, e.g. fruits, clean and wash thoroughly;



- Cook food thoroughly. All shellfish should be cooked at boiling temperature for not less than five minutes before eating;
- Keep the premises and kitchen utensils clean; and
- Dispose of rubbish properly.

To know more about...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit 'Health Zone' website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ 'Health@work.hk Project', please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>

<sup>1</sup> The Centre for Health Protection